

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method of searching unstructured data stored in a database, the
2 method comprising:
3 storing unstructured data in a column of a database table;
4 allowing a user to identify elements in the unstructured data as indexed
5 elements;
6 creating an intermediate index into the unstructured data from the
7 identified elements; and
8 allowing a user to create queries on the unstructured data using the
9 indexed elements.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the queries specify at least one
2 value and an operation that is to be performed on an identified element.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2 wherein the queries further include a start
2 date and an end date.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the unstructured data is stored in
2 character large object (CLOB) format.
- 1 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the unstructured data comprises a
2 well-formed XML document stored within a column of a database table.
- 1 6. The method of claim 5 wherein XML fields of the unstructured
2 data are filled with transaction data from a database transaction based on a predefined
3 mapping to multiple data sources.
- 1 7. The method of claim 6 wherein the multiple data sources are
2 comprise multiple tables of a database.
- 1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the unstructured data is part of an
2 electronic record stored in a common repository of electronic records that provides an
3 audit trail that cannot be altered or disabled by users of the system.
- 1 9. A method of searching XML data stored in a column of a
2 database table in character large object (CLOB) format, the method comprising:

3 storing the XML data in the column of the database table, wherein the
4 XML data comprises a first plurality of XML elements that conform to a first data type
5 definition (DTD) and a second plurality of XML elements that conform to a second
6 DTD;

7 allowing a user to identify elements from the first and second plurality
8 of XML elements in XML data as indexed elements;

9 creating an intermediate index into the XML data from the identified
10 elements; and

11 allowing a user to create queries on the unstructured data using the
12 indexed elements.

1 10. The method of claim 9 wherein the first and second DTDs
2 include first and second XML elements, respectively, that share a common name but
3 represent different types of data and wherein the user can create a first indexed element
4 that represents the first XML element and not the second XML element and a second
5 indexed element that represents the second XML element and not the first XML
6 element.

1 11. A computer system for searching unstructured data stored in a
2 database, the computer system comprising:

3 a processor;

4 a database; and

5 a computer-readable memory coupled to the processor, the computer-
6 readable memory configured to store a computer program;

7 wherein the processor is operative with the computer program to:

8 (i) store unstructured data in a column of a database table;

9 (ii) allow a user to identify elements in the unstructured data
10 as indexed elements;

11 (iii) create an intermediate index into the unstructured data
12 from the identified elements; and

13 (iv) allow a user to create queries on the unstructured data
14 using the indexed elements.

1 12. The computer system of claim 11 wherein the queries specify at
2 least one value and an operation that is to be performed on an identified element.

1 13. The computer system of claim 11 wherein the unstructured data
2 is stored in character large object (CLOB) format.

1 14. The computer system of claim 163 wherein the unstructured data
2 comprises well-formed XML documents stored within a column of a table stored in the
3 database.

4 15. The computer system of claim 14 wherein fields of the
5 unstructured data are filled with transaction data from a database transaction based on a
6 predefined mapping to multiple data sources.

1 16. A computer program stored on a computer-readable storage
2 medium for searching unstructured data stored in a database, the computer program
3 comprising:
4 storing unstructured data in a column of a database table;
5 allowing a user to identify elements in the unstructured data as indexed
6 elements;
7 creating an intermediate index into the unstructured data from the
8 identified elements; and
9 allowing a user to create queries on the unstructured data using the
10 indexed elements.

1 17. The computer program of claim 16 wherein the queries specify at
2 least one value and an operation that is to be performed on an identified element.

1 18. The computer program of claim 16 wherein the unstructured data
2 is stored in character large object (CLOB) format.

1 19. The computer program of claim 16 wherein the unstructured data
2 comprises well-formed XML documents stored within a column of a table stored in the
3 database.

1 20. The computer program of claim 14 wherein fields of the
2 unstructured data are filled with transaction data from a database transaction based on a
3 predefined mapping to multiple data sources.